

Senator Slossberg, Representative Morin and distinguished members of the committee, my name is Nicholas Kapoor. I am currently a senior at Sacred Heart University and an intern for a member of the General Assembly this session. I am presently working on a book length manuscript with Dr. Steven Michels entitled *The Case Against Democracy* – which deals with participatory democratic theory – and have done research with Dr. Gary Rose on public campaign financing. I therefore come before you today to testify in opposition to HB 5235 and in support of HB 5233.

HB 5235 - An Act Concerning Grant Amounts From the Citizens' Election Fund will deter the efforts of candidates to run for state office. To support this claim I offer evidence of Dr. Rose's analysis of the past three state election cycles. For all intents and purposes of this discussion a "competitive district" is one that was won by ten points or fewer and a "landslide victory" is one of a win by twenty points or more. In 2006, 9% of General Assembly seats were competitive, 76% were landslide victories. In 2008, the same numbers held. However, in 2010, the first election cycle that saw the full implementation of the Citizens' Election Fund, 21% of General Assembly seats were competitive and 58% were landslide victories. This is more than double the competitiveness from the previous two election cycles. Clearly, the Citizens' Election Fund had an impact. Cutting funding to qualified candidates is a mistake. The definition of a healthy democracy is one in which voters can choose between worthy, competent candidates. If one candidate can monetarily overshadow another, a great disadvantage has been done to the electorate. The Citizens' Election Fund levels the playing field and creates healthy competition. HB 5235, even though this bill only calls for a small decrease in funding, would be unwise legislation.

On the other hand, HB 5233 – An Act Concerning Grants From The Citizens' Election Fund To Unopposed Candidates is a piece of excellent legislation. Simply, if a candidate is running unopposed, no funding should be given for the sole fact that this candidate has no opposition. Therefore, there is no need to run a competitive campaign with no competition. It is true that unopposed candidates still need to reach their constituents to form a rapport; however, an unopposed candidate running for Governor should not be entitled to \$900,000 of state money – especially in these hard economic times.

I would also like to note to the committee, as I'm sure you are already aware, there is currently a case on a writ of certiorari to the Supreme Court, *Connecticut Green Party, et al. v. Garfield*. This case, most recently decided by the Second Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that lobbyists can contribute to state candidates' campaigns and lobbyists and state contractors can solicit contributions to a state candidate's campaign on his or her behalf by reasoning of a lobbyist or state contractor's First Amendment right of free speech. Depending on how the Supreme Court rules, if they do at all, I'm sure the numbers will have to be fixed once again whether these bills pass or not.

In conclusion, it is evident that the Citizens' Election Program works. And works quite well. HB 5233 is a good way to trim a few dollars off of the ever growing budget; however, HB 5235 will inhibit the competitiveness that was seen in the 2010 election cycle and therefore, go against the initial logic of why the Fund was set up.

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